

# Park Mead Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	114408
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	378856
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	David Marshall

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	91
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Richard Page
<b>Headteacher</b>	Wendy Gibbins (executive headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Upper Dicker Hailsham East Sussex BN27 3QP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01323 844247
<b>Fax number</b>	01323 844247
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	18–19 January 2012
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## Introduction

Inspection team

David Marshall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent five hours observing teaching, which included visiting nine class lessons, and a number of smaller teaching groups. In all, five teachers were observed. In addition, discussions were held with different groups of pupils, six members of the governing body, the executive headteacher, all staff members and a number of parents and carers. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' performance and progress, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, school policies and curriculum planning documents. Inspectors analysed 34 inspection questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as those completed by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

Park Mead Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The pupils come from a range of backgrounds. Just over half come from the town of Hailsham and a quarter from local villages. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with a disability or who have special educational needs is higher than the national average. Most of their needs relate to learning difficulties. The school did not meet the government's floor standard in 2011. This means that the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level in English and mathematics and making expected progress was below the minimum level set by government.

In May 2011 the school entered into a formal arrangement with a primary school in Hailsham by sharing their headteacher for two and a half days a week, she is now the Executive Headteacher of Park Mead.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

### Key findings

- In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the underachievement of, and weak teaching experienced by, groups of pupils in some classes in the school.
- Inspection evidence shows that pupils are making improved but inconsistent progress across the school. Pupils in the Years 5/6 class are making good progress and attainment is above average in mathematics and reading. However, some of the pupils in the Years 1/2 class are still attaining levels below those expected for their age in reading and writing, and their progress is inadequate.
- The quality of teaching over time has not been good enough to secure consistent progress for all pupils and is inadequate. However, there have been considerable changes of teaching staff in the last year and the quality of teaching observed during this inspection indicates that significant improvement is underway.
- The use of assessment has improved over the last few months and teachers now have a sound understanding of what all pupils need to do to improve their attainment and progress.
- The curriculum has been modified recently to enable the pupils to enjoy a range of activities that promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development more effectively. These changes are not yet fully embedded or consistently used across the school.
- Pupils’ behaviour throughout the school during the inspection was largely good. The focus on behaviour in the last term has made pupils more aware of the

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impact of their behaviour on others and their progress overall.

- The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher have successfully reorganised the school through their rigorous analysis of what needs to be improved. They have very effectively created a common understanding among the whole staff of what needs to be achieved in order to ensure the best possible progress for each pupil. The opportunity for other teachers to take responsibility for an aspect of the school's development is now being established.
- Although some of the changes are relatively recent, the quality of teaching, through the effective use of assessment, is now much improved. The partnership with parents and carers is highly positive and the school's modified behaviour policy is proving to be very effective. These are significant improvements since the previous inspection.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in Key Stage 1, by making sure teachers' planning offers the right challenge for all groups of pupils in all lessons.
- Improve opportunities for learning for all pupils by ensuring that changes in the curriculum are embedded in all classes so that:
  - pupils are given the maximum opportunities to practise and reinforce their skills and learning in English and mathematics
  - the exciting and relevant activities that are linked across subject areas are present in all lessons.
- Ensure that leaders and managers accelerate the pace of improvement by:
  - extending opportunities for staff to observe the best practice in the school
  - monitoring and evaluating all initiatives so that effective practice becomes embedded and any remaining inconsistencies are eliminated
  - giving middle managers opportunities to develop teaching and learning so they can provide targeted support for staff.

## **Main report**

### **Achievement of pupils**

Pupils join the school with skills and knowledge that are similar to those found nationally for their age, but this varies year-on-year within the small cohorts. As the school's records show, and inspection evidence confirms, all pupils are making noticeably improved progress but it is still inconsistent across the school. Year 6 pupils, for example, are making good progress and are being well prepared for the next stage of their education. Whereas last year's national assessments shows Year 6 pupils achieving well below the standards expected for their age in English and in

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mathematics, current school data show that Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve above average standards by the time they leave the school in summer 2012. The standard of reading in Year 6 is now above average.

Effective organisation and careful assessments enable children to make good progress very quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 however varies considerably, but is below average overall.

In mathematics, pupils' past work and work within lessons illustrate their growing confidence in basic and more advanced number calculations and problem solving. Throughout the school, the pupils' work on display and in their books clearly shows the improved progress they make in their written work and in art.

Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. This stems from the high priority school leaders give to meeting their needs, and the rigorous and effective work of the new special educational needs coordinator.

Almost all parents and carers agreed that their children are making improved progress now and are appreciative of the efforts school leaders make to involve them in their children's learning. Inspection evidence fully concurs with the parents' and carers' positive views.

### **Quality of teaching**

In almost all lessons observed, pupils were well motivated by the ideas and resources presented and were keen to please their teachers and other adults. The revised school curriculum is planned in detail to promote pupils' enjoyment of learning and to support their social and moral development. It is being adapted to encourage creativity and practical learning experiences. Although a good deal has been achieved in making the curriculum more appropriate in meeting individual pupils' needs, these approaches are not yet fully developed to ensure that pupils' skills in English and mathematics are consistently reinforced whenever possible.

The teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is being established well throughout the school and is making an impact on closing the gaps in pupils' reading skills in the lower end of the school. However, due to the previous significant underachievement of pupils in Key Stage 1, and the constant need to focus on the behaviour of a few, the pace of the lessons is too slow and the progress pupils make is limited. Nevertheless, on most occasions teaching is being adapted to the varied individual needs of each pupil so that work reflects much higher expectations. This is also clear in the staff's higher expectations of pupils' progress and in the more challenging targets now being set for individuals and year groups. Teachers are now consistently taking the opportunity to reinforce these targets when marking pupils' work. However, opportunities are occasionally missed in lessons to pick up on where pupils need to go next in order to improve their skills. In the most effective lessons

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this does occur and lessons are very challenging and are fun. This was clear in a mathematics lesson on multiplication where pupils in Years 5/6 made outstanding progress. The teacher was quick to offer greater challenge to the more-able pupils as soon as this was appropriate. It is these highly effective aspects of teaching and learning that are not yet consistently seen throughout the school. Inspection evidence supports the largely positive views of the parents and carers who are pleased with how the quality of teaching is improving.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding well. Pupils know there is always someone they can turn to in moments of difficulty. Throughout the school, there are consistently good standards of behaviour. Pupils' good attitudes and social skills were evident especially in the two classes for older pupils. Pupils respect each other and socialise well. This was very apparent in an English lesson in the Year 3/4 class when pupils were using different media to express movement. The pupils were enthusiastic and sensible as they shared their ideas and wrote their poetry. The behaviour of a few pupils in Key Stage 1 is still a cause for concern. However, while not yet completely secure, this is being dealt with firmly and effectively which is making pupils' learning much more consistent.

Pupils say they enjoy school and love the large amount of space outside. Their attendance is above average. Pupils say they feel safe, as they know that adults are very mindful of any concerns. As one boy confirmed, 'We don't get any bullying here. We all get on well together.'

Parents and carers are largely pleased with the behaviour and safety of their children in the school. As one parent wrote, 'Recent staff changes make us feel more optimistic about the future as we feel there is now a good combination of leadership in place. Our previous concerns were mainly that bad behaviour was causing disruption in class, and children were not being challenged to their individual merits. However, we feel that these two areas are improving with the recent staff changes.'

### **Leadership and management**

As the senior leaders are aware, the rate of school improvement has been too slow until this year. The partnership between the executive headteacher and the deputy headteacher has begun to move the school forward at a much improved pace. There is a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need more development. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and this has resulted in a comprehensive improvement plan with very challenging targets and clear guidance for raising standards and eliminating any inconsistencies in practice. These well-embedded, fully understood and shared aspects illustrate the school's satisfactory capacity for continuing its improvement. The need to strengthen the capability of other staff to take responsibility for their areas of development is well understood by school leaders. One parent wrote, 'I have had a child at Park Mead for six years now and have witnessed lots of change in this time. A lot of this has been extremely

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disruptive for the children. I now feel very strongly that the leadership that is now in place (specifically the head and deputy) is fantastic and I am extremely optimistic about the future of Park Mead under this new leadership and am looking forward to a period of stability at the school.' Inspection evidence shows that the school is benefiting from the greater stability that is now being firmly established.

There has been a significant improvement in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, contributing to their much improved behaviour. The amendments that have been made to the curriculum have improved the range and type of activities for pupils, and increased their enjoyment in lessons. The Early Years Foundation Stage classroom area is well resourced and organised, and the small outdoor area is used very effectively to support learning and children's enjoyment. Activities are carefully enhanced by the use of rich language, including through signs and questions, and by linking the tasks carefully to those taking place indoors. This very good practice is yet to be mirrored throughout the rest of the school.

Governors are supportive and increasingly hold the school to account by challenging decisions and requesting explanations about the outcomes for pupils. Although the school takes its duty to promote equality of opportunities seriously, it has, until recently, failed to take appropriate action to eliminate differences in achievement between groups of pupils. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are effective. Staff are well trained, show good care for pupils and work closely with a range of organisations to ensure pupils are safe and secure.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**

23 January 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Park Mead Primary School, Upper Dicker, BN27 3QP**



Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school when I visited you recently. I thoroughly enjoyed my time with you and would now like to tell you what I found out. Although there are many things in your school that have improved recently, there are some things that still need to be made better because you are not all making the progress you should. I have asked the school leaders to make some important changes and we call this 'a notice to improve'. The school will be inspected again in six to eight months' time to check on the progress being made.

These are some of the things your school does well.

- Those of you who are older are making better progress than you were and really try hard at all times. I was impressed that you knew what to do to make your work better.
- You all benefit from the many different activities available to you both during and after school.
- You all really enjoy being in school. Many of you try very hard to help others. For instance, the school council and ECO Council do a terrific job.
- Most of you behave well, work hard and listen very carefully to your teachers – although some of you still find this hard.
- All the adults in the school look after you well. They always make sure that you get help if you need it.
- Your headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school better for you. They know exactly how to help you to improve and have a clear idea of what they need to do in other areas of the school's work.

I have asked your teachers to make sure that, no matter which class you are in, all your lessons are as good as possible and are exactly right for what you need to do next. They will also be looking at how to link subjects together to make sure that lessons are as interesting as they can be. It is important that staff can learn from each other about how to make all of your lessons even better. I have asked your headteacher to help other teachers to take more responsibility for making sure things improve.

All of you can help by continuing to listen carefully, behaving well at all times, and taking note of what the teachers say so that you can make the best possible progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall  
Lead inspector

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